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Southwest NOW MAGAZINE

Cedar Hill - DeSoto - Duncanville

February 2009

Time Well Spent

Enthusiastic About Life

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NOW MAGAZINE

Editor's Note

Greetings, Southwest Friends!

Ah February, the month we celebrate love! Sigh. For years I made my children (and many of their friends) personalized, homemade Valentine cards. They were kind of dorky, but the kids liked them, and I truly enjoyed making cards to convey how special each one of them is. I hope each of you find the perfect way to say "I love you."

This month, our stories speak of love: Phil and Lana Brooks, still in love after 30 years of marriage, invite you to tour their woodland retreat; Dotty Germino shares her love of painting; Myrle Westlund's love for her daughter and other intellectually disabled young people led to the formation of the Soaring Eagle Center in DeSoto; Amy Allen's love for volunteering is known throughout Cedar Hill; Dr. Tom Shine has imparted his love for music to many Duncanville Wind Ensemble students.

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Beverly Shay
SouthwestNOW Editor

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Time Well Spent

— By Danielle Parker

It does not take much to make someone's day. A smile, a helping hand or a word of encouragement can be just the thing that forever changes a life. For Cedar Hill resident, Amy Allen, her life's goal has been to uplift and hearten as many as possible through the gift of her time.

Amy is a Texas native, who has her hand in every type of volunteer work you can imagine. Whether it is working in the Cedar Hill New2You Thrift Store, being an active member of the Cedar Hill Independent School District (CHISD) Board of Trustees or mentoring teens at First United Methodist Church (FUMC) of Duncanville, Amy is an active member of her community. "I still have to be valuable. I have to be helping someone, somewhere," Amy said. "I can't just sit around and watch TV. That's just not who I am." A need to affect the world around her has always been something upon which Amy has acted. "I enjoy being a part of what is going on in others' lives," she added. "And I do that by volunteering."

Amy grew up with a passion for people and a desire to influence, knowing she would have an impact on others, particularly the younger generation. "I worked at two different churches in college and thought I wanted to be a youth director for my life's work," she said. That inkling soon grew when she came to the Best Southwest area and joined FUMC Duncanville. Her vibrant and youthful spirit soon got her involved with the church's youth program.

"I enjoy being a part of what is going on in others' lives."

For more than 15 years, Amy taught and mentored preteens in a way that was distinctively relevant to them. "I love junior-highers," she said. "They are not really adults; they are still trying to figure out who they are. It's an exciting age group. Because I love that age, it has become so easy for me to be involved and understanding of the situations they are going through."

Amy's desire to volunteer ardently continued as she got involved with her children's school and extracurricular activities. She became a familiar face seen at sporting events, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and after-school happenings. A few years ago, her involvement in education accelerated. In 2004, Amy was elected to the CHISD school board and became an active advocate for the district she has long supported. "I am a firm believer of the public schools. I taught in public schools for nine years, my children attended public schools and now I'm on the board," she said.

Amy believes her experience as an educator and a mother gives her a unique perspective to share with other board members. "Having been a teacher, it helps to have someone who has been in the classroom to see where the teacher stands. I see everything from that perspective," Amy explained. "But what is so great about the board is we have lots of different viewpoints

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Being a homemaker with older children, Amy has the opportunity to be engaged with what is happening in CHISD, an aspect she absolutely loves. "I'm there almost every time there is a daytime event, because I am the only member that does not have a job during the day," she said. "I love that I get to see the different things happening at the schools around our city. Being on the board allows me to be there and see what the kids are doing. I have the privilege of being a part of a district with a world-class vision."

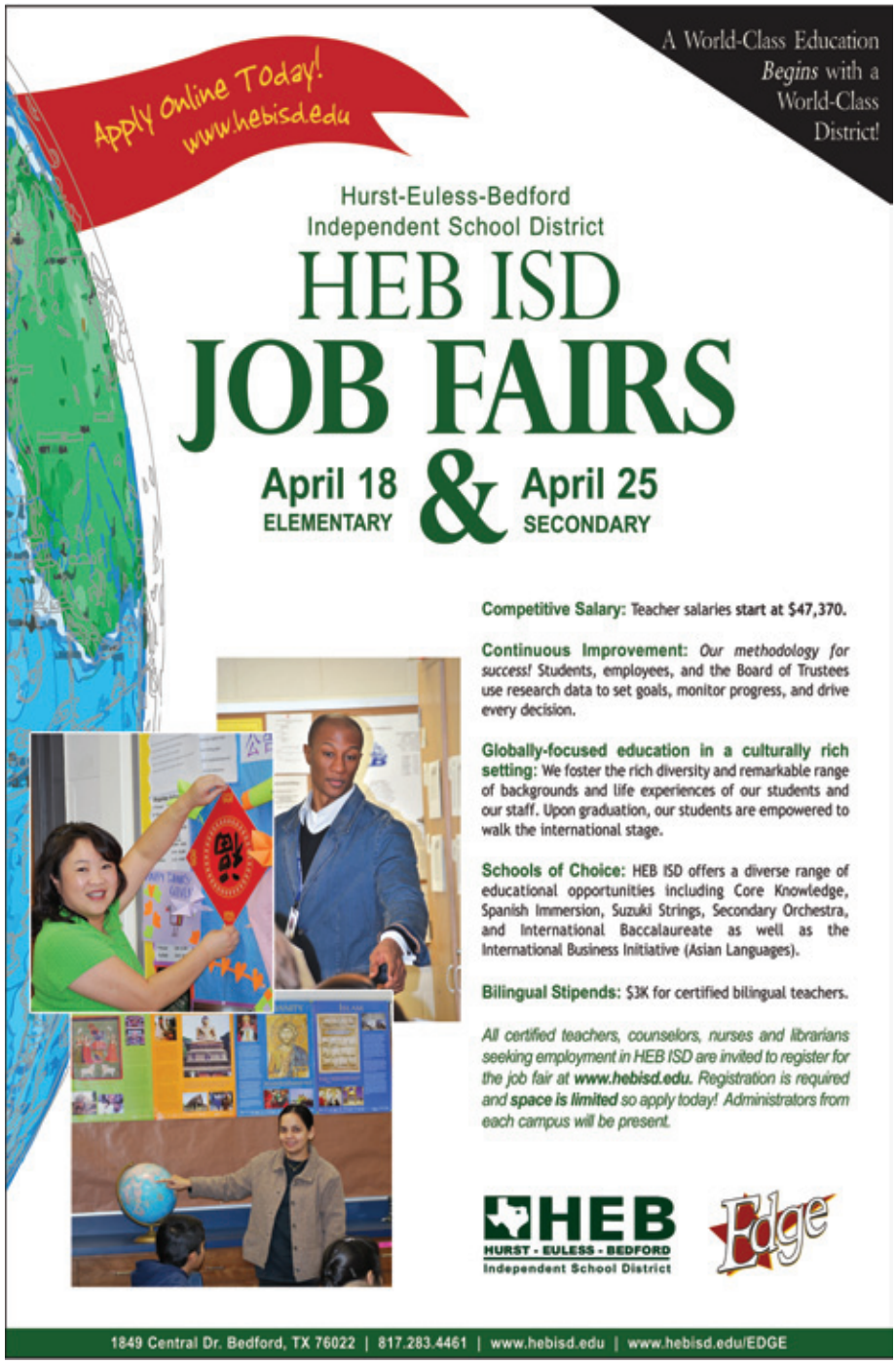
"If I haven't brought a smile to someone's face, then I haven't done my job that day."

Her latest philanthropic effort is her work at the Cedar Hill New2You Thrift Store. "I have always been intrigued by thrift stores," Amy said. "I began volunteering at Cedar Hill's store and found they had a little corner for books. Each time I came in, I would organize the books and upkeep the area. The staff saw that I really liked books; slowly but surely it became my thing." So when the thrift store decided to expand the book section, Amy found another niche on which to spend her time. "The thrift store recently opened a room specifically for books. Before we had a very small section, but now we have a whole room dedicated to just books. I love books and have always wanted to own a bookstore, so this is like a little piece of heaven for me," she confessed. "So I was placed in charge of the room, and I get to alphabetize and divide the books into sections, decorate and create a special little nook in the store."

With all the profits from the thrift store going to benefit the Cedar Hill Food Pantry, Amy loves being a part of the big picture. "After Hurricanes Katrina and Ike, so many came to this area who had lost everything. They had absolutely nothing," she recalled. "They came to the store, and we helped in whatever way we could. I tell you there is nothing as rewarding as knowing you were able to help people to rebuild their lives." While the book room may not be what initially attracts people to the store, Amy is aware that she plays an important role. "People don't typically go to the store for books, but people will notice the books when they are shopping for other things. The area kind of draws them in, and perhaps they will keep coming back. I feel that I am kind of like the chocolate — not really necessary, but definitely important nonetheless," she said.

Her motivation is not a salary or benefits. Amy simply said volunteering is what she enjoys. "My faith drives my life," she expressed. "I believe strongly in 'What would Jesus do?'" It all comes down to bringing joy to others. "I get enthusiastic about what I'm doing," she continued. "I just love life and what God has given me. So it makes me happy when I make someone else's day. If I haven't brought a smile to someone's face, then I haven't done my job that day."

As her children grow up, Amy now has additional time on her hands. "With my youngest getting ready to go off to school, I am starting to get an early case of empty-nest syndrome," Amy confessed. "My whole life has been my children, so I am now trying to figure out what I'm going to do next." However, even with a house all to herself and her husband in the near future, Amy said she is not ready to put her feet up. "I know I will keep helping with the youth," she said. "Perhaps someday, I will even write a book." NOW



Enthusiastic About Life

— By Beverly Shay

Enthusiasm is a priceless commodity most of us only achieve occasionally, but there is a group of young people in DeSoto who are full of endless enthusiasm. They can be found at the Soaring Eagle Center, a growing thrift store where many volunteers have been serving DeSoto for three years.

"As my daughter, Kendra, was about to finish high school, I realized there weren't many programs available in South Dallas to meet the needs of young people with intellectual disabilities," Myrle Westlund explained. To meet some of those needs, Myrle incorporated the Soaring Eagle Center as a nonprofit endeavor in June, 2003. By 2004, they were given a tax-free status, enabling them to provide social activities and educational services. "Texas ranks 50th in services for people with intellectual disabilities, according to the United Cerebral Palsy annual survey report. As a parent of an intellectually disabled child, I knew firsthand how these young people, who can so easily fall through the system, need to be meaningfully occupied," Myrle remarked.

Rather than complain about what the government was *not* doing, Myrle, other mothers and some special education teachers decided to be proactive. "I feel God has directed us every step of the way!" Myrle enthused. She began to research opportunities that would meet specific needs; this opened an opportunity to speak about young people with intellectual disabilities at a conference in Colorado. "Following that conference, we were sent a $500 check, exactly what we needed to gain tax-exempt status! That was so validating," Myrle reported. A friend with grant-writing experience helped with all the necessary paperwork.

By the summer, 2005, Myrle had developed a plan for a day program/business venture perfect for their young adults: a thrift store. "Before we opened the store in January 2006, we had our young people spend two weeks organizing a garage sale," she shared. "They showed us they were definitely up for the task of thrift store work." Each of the young associates must have completed high school, and currently, there are eight working a half-day in the store, sorting and tagging merchandise, checking donated electronics and working the cash register. They also spend a half day in cooking, sewing, arts, crafts, math, reading, Spanish and letter writing classes. "We have an exercise room, where each associate works out daily – an important aspect of their well-being, since most young people with intellectual disabilities are not inclined toward physical activity," Myrle observed. "My daughter actually inspired us to include daily physical workouts after she lost 35 pounds simply by working out at home each day."

Sometimes, the only programs available for young people with developmental disabilities are sheltered workshops, where they are occupied with piece work — usually packaging items such as screws or bolts. "While those are helpful for some with certain disabilities, we wanted something more stimulating, something that would involve skill interaction and local community service in a real-life environment. Our store is causing the community to recognize the value of people with intellectual disabilities. Our customers come to know and love our young people; in turn, our young people are

"I was so impressed with the staff and how they worked, I became a volunteer."

Barbara Featherston
Duncanville resident and
Methodist Charlton Medical Center
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"They saved my life," says Barbara Featherston, referring to the nurses and physicians on the medical staff at Methodist Charlton Medical Center who treated her for blood clots in her lung and legs. "From the emergency room to the operating room, I received care on just about every floor in the hospital, and they were all really super." Barbara was so touched by the compassion and quality of care she received, she now volunteers in the cardiopulmonary rehabilitation center. "I'm so proud to be a part of all the good things they are doing at Methodist Charlton," she beams. Barbara's story is just one of many reasons why Methodist Charlton Medical Center is a place where life shines bright.

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very enthusiastic about serving their community," Myrle commented.

Life itself prepared Myrle for a business venture she never really imagined taking on. "I am pretty much self-taught on the computer; I gained leadership skills which enabled me to work within the community and organize a business through full-time church ministry for nine years. I also taught high school math for six years and am a 16-year, stay-at-home mom of three. Being a mother equips you for almost everything," Myrle quipped.

"One in 10 families in the Dallas/Fort Worth area has a relative with an intellectual disability. Our young people do not intuitively understand social skills, so we teach them these skills, along with providing tasks that develop fine motor skills," Myrle remarked. "Our goal is that they will continue to learn and grow. One of their biggest needs is friendships, so we emphasize building relationships with each other and their families. They each have similar, yet unique challenges. We participate in Special Olympics, practice basketball weekly and bowl regularly. We have socials quarterly — they love to dance — karaoke, game nights, cookouts and swim parties," Myrle stated. "For me, one of the best outcomes of our program here has been watching them become friends and develop their own circle of peers. The girls have sleepovers where they talk about all sorts of things — like other young people do. Initially, we structured relationships for them, so it is rewarding to see them relate as peers."

Anyone who knows someone with developmental challenges such as these young people face knows their joy. "These young people bring a unique joy and unconditional love; they possess an innocence and purity. They are easy to entertain, because they are so enthusiastic about life. The movie *I am Sam* is a fairly accurate portrayal of their situation.

The biggest thing my daughter has taught me is value; everyone is valuable no matter what they can or cannot do or what they look like. Everyone has something to contribute. I used to value intelligence way too much. People often do not see the value of those different from them because they are uncomfortable around them. Inclusion in public schools has made great inroads, however," Myrle contended.

"Our motto is: Enabling young people with special needs to soar like eagles. I chose that for two reasons: our young people are also DeSoto's eagles, and Isaiah 40:31 states, '… but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.' Like every parent, we want our children to 'soar like eagles.' Here, we are giving them every opportunity we can," Myrle proclaimed.

This venture is unique in its provision of a program where these challenged young people can be meaningfully involved in serving the community, while continuing to learn and grow. "The thrift shop is our only source of funding; people can help by donating anything in good condition: clothes, furniture, electronics and household items. We even offer frequent shopper cards!" Myrle enthused.

Myrle's daughter, Kendra, and Amy, two associates working in the center, quickly summed up their weekly schedule by listing their daily responsibilities. Both girls boasted of the recent triumph the girls' basketball team had over the boys'. "I really like being with other people and getting to meet new people who come in to shop," Kendra explained. Amy, who organizes the children's department, said she likes the classes they take. "On Fridays, we write thank you letters to the donors," Kendra stated. "It's really good of people to help us out like that," Amy remarked. NOW

Instrumental Inspiration

— By Katrina D. McNair

Walking the corridors of Duncanville High School's (DHS) band hall is a colorful and visual testament to an awesome and award-winning program. Multiple frames hold the photos of smiling musicians and glowing majorettes. Each school year, the faces change — but the enthusiasm and pride revealed in the young faces never fades.

For many of these students, Tom Shine is the reason for their smiles, as well as the success of the program. Tom is the band director for DHS and has held that position since 1980. A native of Belton, Texas, Tom has been able to combine two passions — teaching and music — into a very productive and rewarding career. "I was in band, like a lot of kids are, and really liked playing music," he said, when asked what inspired his love of music. In fact, he was pretty darn good when it came to playing clarinet, earning all-state recognition while attending Belton High School. "That really inspired me to do more with music," he added.

That "more" led Tom to attend the University of Texas at Austin (UT), where he earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree in music education. Family influences were also instrumental in further awakening the musician in Tom as he was growing up. "My older brother was in band, and it was sort of taken for granted I would be in band, because we already owned the instrument," he said. "So, I played his instrument for a while until I got my own." A younger brother is also a musician.

Although multitudes of children are interested in music, not all of them have grown into adults with a passion for teaching and inspiring others through music. Tom did, after seeing how his own experiences with his teachers changed him. "There were many teachers in my family. I admired many of my teachers and had some great ones," he said. "In spite of it being a really small town, there were some really gifted teachers who inspired me to think of teaching as a career."

After beginning his teaching career in Angleton, Texas, Tom relocated to Duncanville by way of Austin and Lampasas, along with his wife, Verda, who teaches intermediate and middle school band in the Duncanville ISD. The couple, both clarinet players, met while sitting next to one another in the UT-Austin band. In his position as band director, Tom is in charge of about 250 musicians in the marching band which is comprised of the Freshman Band, Wind Ensemble, Honors Band and Symphonic Band and an auxiliary of majorettes and flag girls called the High Hats.

Since his arrival, Tom has seen changes in the band structure and makeup. "It was already pretty big, probably 180 or so students," he said. "My predecessor, Bill Phillips, was a really good teacher, recruiter and motivator, and did some really great things with the program." The High Hats, formerly two groups of young women, were combined into one group.

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Growing enrollment has changed the school as well. At the time of Tom's arrival, DHS was transitioning from a 4A to a 5A school, reflective of the increased student body. "They had been a small country school all through the '60s and '70s and then in the late '70s, they grew very fast. The standards of competition are higher in 5A than in 4A. It's more competitive and more difficult to be competitive."

Despite the challenges of moving to 5A competition, Duncanville's band has not missed a beat. Over the years, they have regularly competed and placed in University Interscholastic League (UIL) competitions and other regional contests. One highlight of all these competitions is the success of the band's Wind Ensemble. Last fall, they were chosen as the 5A Honor Band in the state of Texas.

Held every two years, the state's honor band competition brings together some of the most talented student musicians in the state. If a school wins the honor band competition, they are not allowed to enter again for four years, to ensure any veterans are not competing again in order to keep the competition fair. With this system, a traditional "back-to-back" win is not possible, but Duncanville has come as close as you can get, winning both in 2004 and in 2008.

For the 2008 competition, the students prepared three pieces, one of which was transcribed by a band staff member and former student, Brian Beck. Brian is one of the directors of Byrd Middle School's band, which also placed in the honors band competition in 2004 and 2008. Both bands will prepare an hour-long Honor Band Concert program to be presented to the Texas Music Educators Association in San Antonio in mid-February.

Each high school band member must audition for placement in the four band divisions. All of Duncanville's

middle schools serve as feeder schools for DHS and student musicians are taught at the highest levels so they will be successful once they reach the high school.

Despite all the trophies, plaques and accolades the band has received over the years, Tom feels another symbol of the program's success is its staying power. "I think the real success is the longevity of the program and the fact that it's been competitive for a long time. We really became competitive in the mid-1980s and have been that way since then," he said. "We're the only 5A band in the whole state that has been in the state marching finals every year since 1988. We're the only 5A band to win honor band back-to-back, with our middle school. That's never been done."

Throughout his tenure, Tom has seen his students fan out across the globe. Some have gone on to play professionally. In addition to Brian Beck, another former student, Rena McCampbell, is a first-year teacher at one of Duncanville's middle schools. Tom has also kept the family love of music alive through his youngest son, Nick, who is a trombone major and recent graduate from Southern Methodist University.

Obviously, Tom hopes his students walk away with a love and appreciation for music which will last throughout their lives. However, his lessons serve as a greater metaphor for building families and communities, which he hopes his students appreciate. "I hope they've learned something about how to build a community through being part of our group; that they've learned how people have to give up part of themselves in order to build a community and to share with each other the process of building it," Tom explained. "That has a lot to do with what we do in music, the way we give up a part of ourselves to make something that is greater than the sum of its parts." NOW

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A Real Retreat

At Home With
Phil and Lana Brooks

— By Beverly Shay

Nestled against a plunging ravine, facing a cul-de-sac of other gracious homes is the woodland retreat of Phil and Lana Brooks. "Each of the houses we have owned has been a miracle home," Lana stated in her well-modulated teacher's voice. "We weren't even looking to sell our 6-7,000-square-foot Fort Worth home of 10 years, but when a friend of ours with a large family asked to see it and promptly told us whenever we were ready to sell, they would be ready to buy, we had to consider it. After all, our older children were adults and moving out on their own; we really didn't need the six-bedroom, eight-bath home anymore, but our friends sure did," Lana reported with a soft giggle. "I am a Realtor, so I gave them the price we would list it at, and they said, 'OK.' Suddenly, we needed to look for a new home!

"We looked in many areas, found a home in Arlington, were ready to make an offer $20,000 below the list price, but that very day the price was raised, so we never even made the offer. We felt the door had closed. Then we decided to look closer to where my mother lived and worked and ended up looking in Lake Ridge," Lana commented. "This house came on the market that very day. Someone else was supposed to close on it, but twice hadn't shown up for the closing. We liked it immediately. Because it was a foreclosure, therefore affordable, and I knew exactly what to do, we got the contract in place over the weekend," Lana stated. "We really felt the Lord had shown us this was where we were to live."

In one short month, their unplanned move was set in motion and accomplished.

"We had to sell a lot and we still filled an entire Salvation Army truck with giveaways," Phil commented, the effort of that move apparent on his features. They really had to downsize to fit in their new 3,600-square-foot, four-bedroom, three-and-a-half bath, three-car garage haven. "Only two of our five children would be living with us," Lana recalled. "Now Adam is the only one living at home."

The pleasure of this woodland retreat begins even as you traverse the gracious front lawn. The home is truly nestled back against the descent to the ravine. Tall, narrow, diamond-shaped, cut-glass panes frame the front door which opens into a tall foyer with a sparkling chandelier. Pillars and a half wall surround the somewhat octagonal, sunken living room. No curtains curtail the view of the woods behind their home. "We don't need them because no one can see in and we love the

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extension the view provides," Lana explained. The soaring 18-foot ceiling is accented by a lovely 8-foot-tall, rectangular mirror above the dark green marble fireplace, angled across from the burgundy, green and blue plaid couch. The same marble is found on the foyer floor. "It's a good thing the painters were still in here with their scaffolding and were able to hang the mirror up straight on the first try," Lana laughed.

"We replaced all the old carpet and tile, left the oak hardwood floors throughout most of the house and hired painters because the walls and ceilings are so high," Lana remarked. Throughout the downstairs, everything is painted an eye-soothing light, golden yellow. "The ceilings are actually the same color," Phil stated, "but the recessed lighting makes them appear lighter."

Overlooking the front lawn is their oak-paneled study with built-in bookshelves full of well-read books. Leather chairs add to the inviting, studious ambiance of the room both Lana and Phil use as an office. Three bedrooms and a bathroom comprise the south wing of the house. Their daughter, Annalie's, room has a long window seat inviting one to snuggle up with a book and watch nature out back. A built-in desk, graced with a piano keyboard beneath shelves of more books, takes up the wall across from the burgundy-comfortered bed, private bath and enormous walk-in closet.

The guest room has a trundle bed, an exercise bike and more books. Crosses of all sorts decorate the unshelved wall. The other room belongs to 15-year-old Adam. His sleigh bed, uniquely marked as his, has a navy comforter to match the various lighthouses and nautical decor hailing from Phil's former office.

Tucked into nooks along the hallway, through the foyer, into the formal dining room, the kitchen and den are recessed, glass-shelved bookcases filled with burgundy decorative plates and

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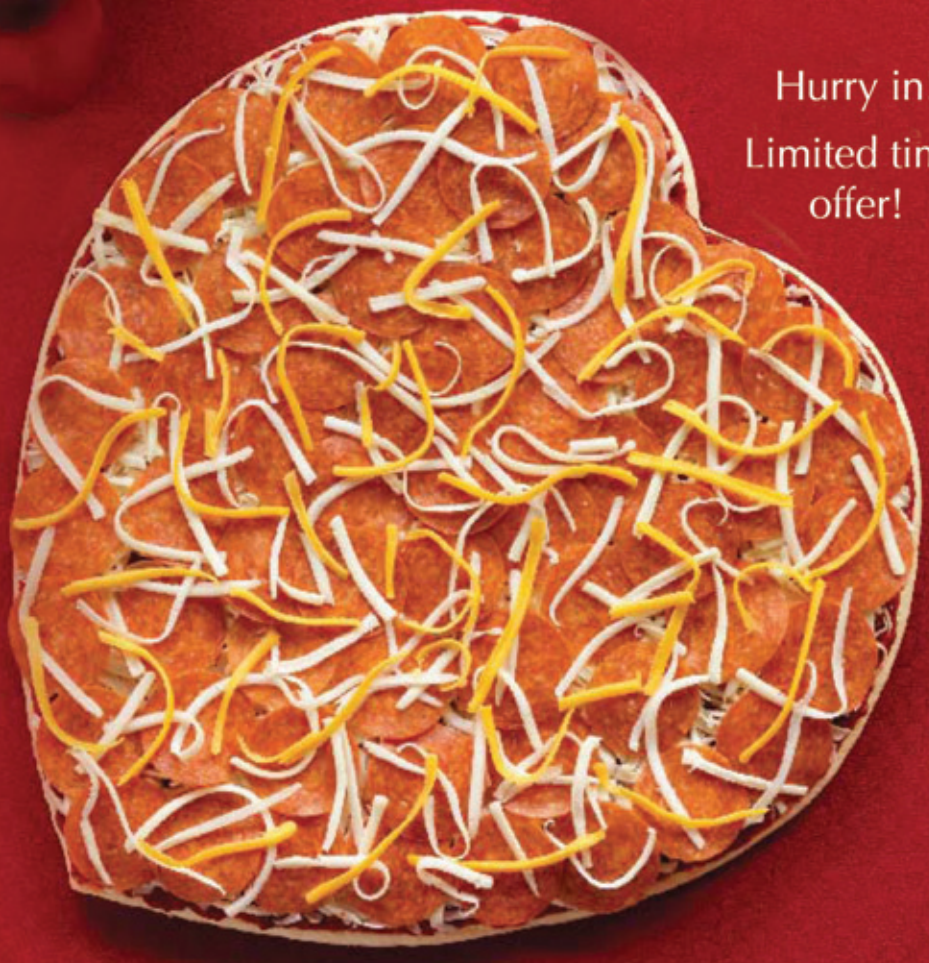

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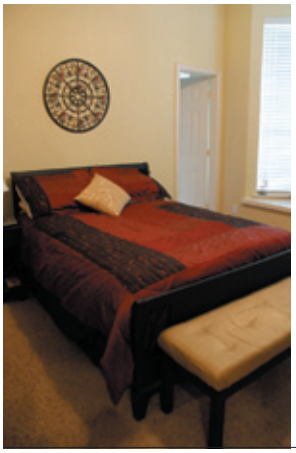

candles, olive wood Bible figurines and photo albums. The dining room, opposite the stairway, has a bay of seven narrow, vertical windows, a built-in hutch and a diagonally laid hardwood floor.

The main living area downstairs is the kitchen/family room, again with the somewhat octagonal shape found throughout the house. "We redid a lot in the kitchen: granite countertops, new faucets, porcelain tiled backsplash to match the tile flooring, stainless steel appliances." The breakfast room has — surprise — an octagonal table and a cherry hutch that fits perfectly on its wall. The family room and breakfast room windows have wide-slatted blinds "that we never close," admitted Lana. A few of her many nativity sets are displayed in the family room they call their "Texas room" because of iron stars on the walls and the leather couches facing the second of their three fireplaces.

"Our real retreat is upstairs," Lana confided. "We didn't really want a second story, but this is worth the climb." A beautiful cherry highboy sits in the hallway at the top of the stairs, but their aerie invites investigation. A suite of gracious proportions draws one into a sitting area boasting of two burgundy leather chairs around a fireplace. French doors open to a deck from which you can watch fireworks over Joe Pool Lake, Six Flags over Texas and Ft. Worth's city lights at night. Deck chairs and cool breezes, starlit skies and a neighborless back view complete the outdoor appeal.

The Brooks' tall king-sized bed, decked in gold and black, resides in the bay window portion of the suite. Here also is a closet that gives new meaning to the term "walk-in." Wrapping around a corner, with room for a rectangular bench, it features so many built-in shelves they need no bureaus.

The master bath continues the upstairs mossy green paint scheme and the somewhat octagonal shapes found in the bedroom and sitting area. It is luxuriously appointed, with a sunken Jacuzzi tub surrounded with glass block windows and ivory candles, a huge walk-in shower and separate his-and-her vanities.

"We come up here and we are truly away from the world. It is the most restful place to be. This really is our own private retreat," sighed a very contented lady of the house.

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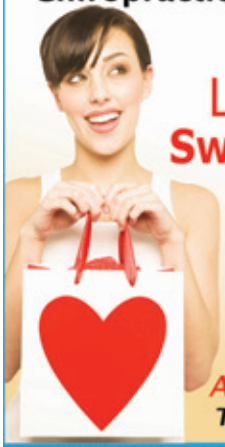

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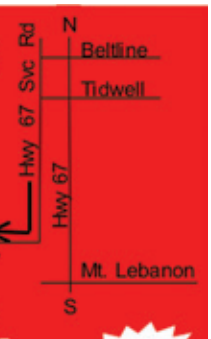

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A Love for Art

"Painting is such therapy for me; it's something I can lose myself in."

— By Beverly Shay

"Art has always been my favorite pastime," Dotty Germino shared. "As a child I sketched comic book covers. I have never traced over anything, but I have always copied something I could see: photos, calendar pictures, photos in *National Geographic* or other magazines. My first grade teacher noticed my sketches and had me draw posters, which she hung in the classroom; I remember drawing a sheep and a policeman."

As Dotty reminisced, she interspersed her own art history with tales of her family, life documented by the various places they lived when each of her children were born. "I was quite a sporadic painter, because I really didn't have time, what with my husband, caring for all the children (including grandchildren later on), housework to keep up with, caring for my mother for 20 years and a secretarial business I ran out of my home. But I never lost the desire to paint," Dotty emphasized, recalling how busy her brood kept her. "At one point each year, my three girls are all the same age," she said of her oldest daughter and twin daughters born within a 12-month span. While pregnant with her fifth child, she took some home-study sketching lessons and later took lessons from a local New Jersey oil artist.

"Oils are very different than sketching. I had to learn colors, shading, perspective, composition. I'm still learning. I'm not really anywhere near being a professional artist, but I have improved. Painting is such therapy for me; it's something I can lose myself in," Dotty explained modestly. Scattered around her house are canvases which document her life, her classes, her experiments and ventures. For a "sporadic" artist, she has an amazing collection.

"I joined an art league while we were living in Oklahoma City. That was the first time I was in an art show. I sold a few paintings. Then in Albuquerque, New Mexico, I was part of another art league; I met artists whose techniques were more advanced than mine, so I watched and learned from them. Oh, I didn't copy their work; I just gleaned from their techniques," she quickly added. "I learned how to blend colors or emphasize certain elements of the picture. Just a small thing can add so much to your painting."

Now Dotty paints for several hours a week, nearly every Tuesday morning at the art league in DeSoto where she is serving her third term as president. "We all learn from each other. At least, I learn from them; I don't know if anyone learns from me," she demurred. "This kitty is my favorite painting," she pointed to a truly lifelike kitten. "I worked and reworked this one over a period of months, and I have to say I am really pleased with how it came out." Dotty paints a lot of birds and animals. "Sometimes it works, but other times …" she trailed off. "When I paint from my head, I don't always get the perspective and proportions correct," she added.

Her collection includes some beautiful seascapes and mountain panoramas. "Several of these were from my pallet-knife era," she said, explaining how she took a class to learn this technique. "It is so freeing not to use a brush and just thrust paint on the canvas with the knife; your strokes are so

bold and strong. I tend to paint within a box; but that style liberated me; it was more rugged somehow," she struggled somewhat to express what you can clearly see in the foamy spray of the water smacking against great chunks of rocks along the shore. These paintings do seem livelier and less placid than some of her rural scenes with barns and bluebonnets.

Other striking paintings that are found around her home are an Indian girl, colorful lizards and frogs. Although Dotty claims she has not yet grasped the finer nuances of watercolors, one of her prize-winners is a watercolor she painted in a workshop. "I have to learn by observing," Dotty explained. "I have tried following steps in books, but I really need to watch the technique to grasp it. Some of her paintings are of *Parade* magazine pages she saved in a file and painted years and years later. She has painted miniatures of hummingbirds, owls and mushrooms on pieces of wood and even has an amazingly detailed India ink drawing of horses which displays very detailed anatomy and movement. "I really am a hobbyist. I have no formal training. You can tell by the dates on my paintings that I just didn't have time to be consistent until my family was grown. But I used my artwork in the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) projects while the kids were growing up," Dotty remembered.

"I often had my grandkids here while I did secretarial work. My grandson would ask me to sketch him a Ninja Turtle; he thought I was the best artist," Dotty smiled at the memory. "Those brief moments of creativity with a child or grandchild not only break up your workday, it bonds you with your loved one. The grandkids would bring a friend over and take them on the tour, 'My grandma painted this … and this … and this …' They're my greatest fans!" Dotty admitted, pleased. NOW

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— By Beverly Shay

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"We offer a complimentary consultation by appointment," stated Leslie Hart-Venden, medical aesthetician, who performs services under the spa's medical director, Dr. Albert Boyd, in their comfortable, soothing spa atmosphere. "It's amazing all the methods now available to assist people in minimizing the effects of aging by improving facial volume and lift with use of Radiasse® and other body fillers which help in removing facial wrinkles and folds as well as reducing or eliminating jowls," said Dr. Boyd, who practices on-site. "Chameleon Medical Spa is one of the few clinics in the Dallas area offering specific laser wavelengths for hair removal treatment for both dark and light skin types. We offer Lipo-Ex™, a noninvasive radio frequency technique used to melt fat. We also offer Meso-Lipo Therapy, an injection technique which destroys fat cells and stimulates collagen formation. This is used most effectively in areas of localized fat like the abdomen, men's 'love handles,' double chins or 'saddle bags' found on hips. This procedure can also be used in facial treatments to provide a non-surgical face lift called meso face lift or meso glow."

Dr. Boyd specializes in these minimally invasive treatments. "Beauty is a subjective concept, varying from culture to culture. Egyptians were known for their use of tattoos and color. Our goal is to correct or modify appearance without compromising functionality, so the person can be comfortable and confident about their appearance. We ask clients to tell us what bothers them about their looks," Dr. Boyd informed. "We bill ourselves as 'Your Gateway to Transformation,'" Leslie added.

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varying degrees of success in hair restoration, using injections, for both men and women," Dr. Boyd said, enumerating some of the many services offered at Chameleon Medical Spa.

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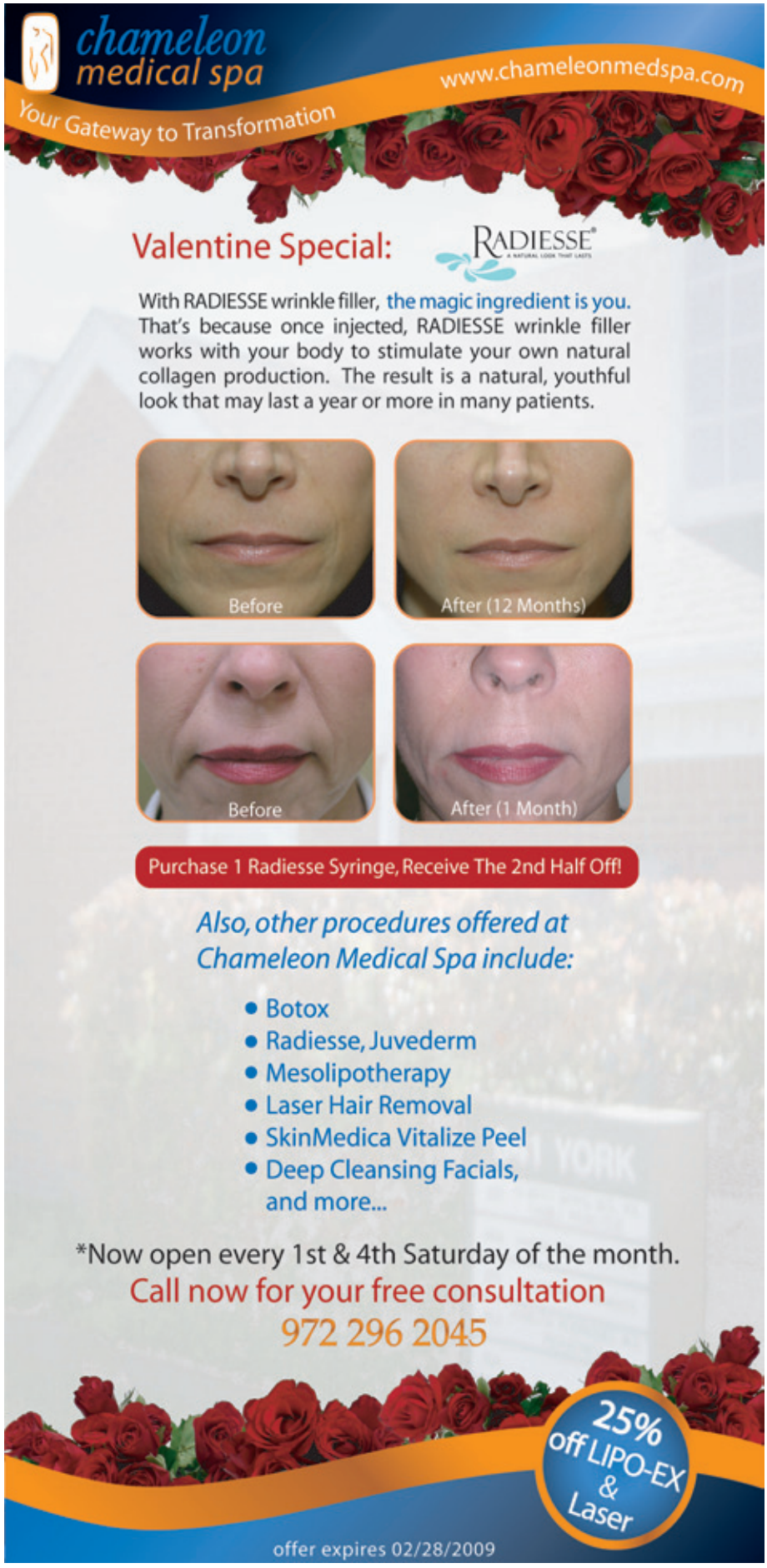

The Cedar Hill Chamber Night Out was held at Jim and Carolyn McKee's home, top left, and was catered by Trios Grill. Ribbon cuttings were held at: Rent-a-Center, top right; Edible Arrangements, second row center; Compro Tax, second row right; and White Rhino Coffee Company & Coffee House, bottom right. ELF and Friends pose with all the bundles of toys, second row left, that were distributed in Cedar Hill. Rent-a-Center presented a $1,000 check, third row right, to the Cedar Hill Food Pantry. Santa, bottom left, visited with Bethany Hess, manager of White Rhino, and Olivia Parvin's son.

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Marcus Murphy, top left, was recognized at the DeSoto ISD board meeting for his accomplishments. He is pictured with Superintendent Lloyd Treadwell. Ribbon cuttings were held at: DeSoto Family Medicine, top right; North Texas GMAC Real Estate, second row left; and Break of Day Design, third row left. Students from Northside Elementary, second row right, learned to play marbles during Colonial Days. Chief Financial Officer Bobby LaBorde, bottom left, accepted two national award plaques from Superintendent Lloyd Treadwell and Board President Don Gant. Members of the Canterbury Robotics Team, bottom right, recently attended a LEGO robotics competition.

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Michael Eaton, DISD November Student of the Month, top left, is pictured with Education Committee Chair Sheila Casey. Carol West, top right, performed on her harp for a senior group at Holy Spirit Catholic Church. The Rotary Club recognized Stephen Cahill, second row left, as their December Student of the Month. A ribbon cutting, third row left, was held at Snap Fitness. Sonali Majnudar, second row right, received her new member plaque during the Chamber's November luncheon meeting. The Duncanville girls varsity soccer team, bottom left, is looking forward to the coming season.

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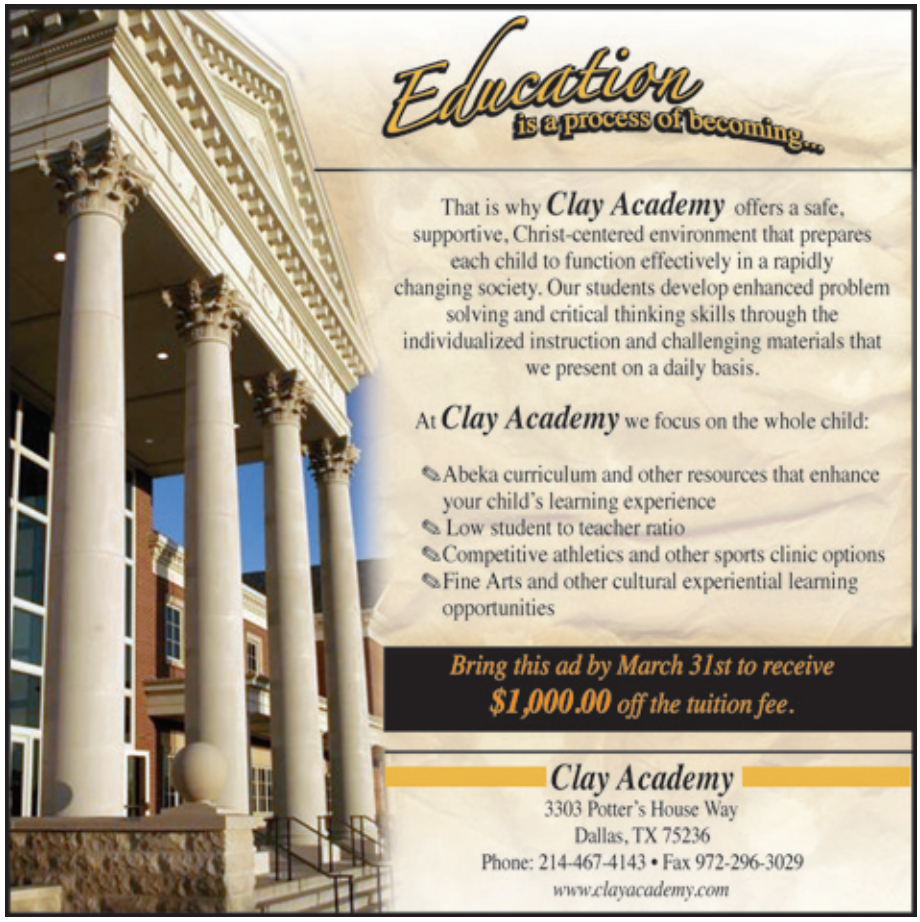

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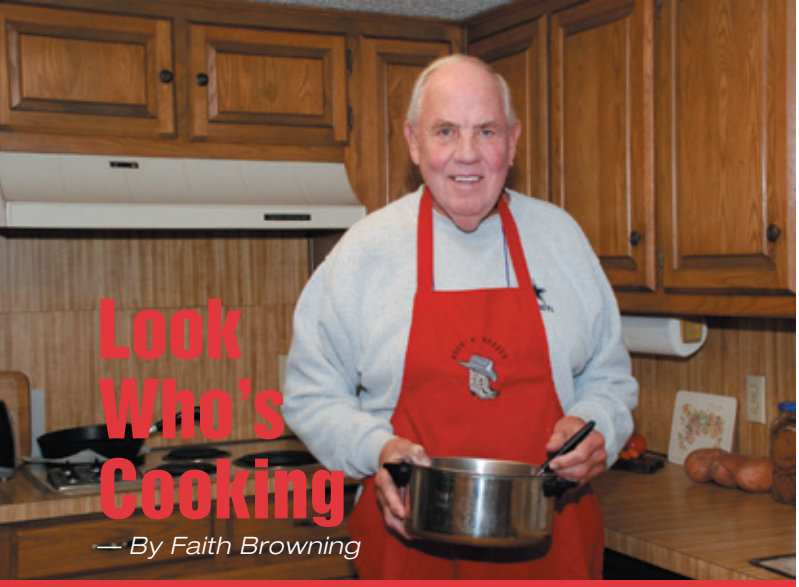

Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

In the Kitchen with Richard Heigele

Richard Heigele's interest in cooking began with the backyard grill. "I'm a Kansas boy by origin," he claimed. "I am basically a meat and potatoes guy. Steak is my meat of choice!" Being of German decent, he prefers to use German sausages in many of his recipes. "I don't really follow the recipes," he admitted. "I've got a knack for putting in different things that are not called for in the original recipe, and it still comes out pretty good."

When Richard is not smoking or grilling meat, he is usually watching or playing sports. "I am very much a sports addict," he stated. "I like all sports. I like to fish and play some golf. I do a little bit of everything!" NOW

To view more of your neighbors' recipes, visit our archives at www.nowmagazines.com.

MARVELOUS MEAT LOAF

2 lbs. ground beef
1 egg
1 pkg. meat loaf seasoning
1 Tbsp. garlic, chopped
1/2 cup bread crumbs
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
pinch of sage
1 large jalapeño, chopped
1 medium onion, chopped
12-oz. can Ro-Tel tomatoes
dash of ketchup (2 squirts)
anise, to taste
2 shakes liquid smoke
Mix all ingredients thoroughly. Place in greased meat loaf pan. Can be topped with ketchup and brown sugar. Bake for 1 hour at 350 F.

WE CALL IT STROGANOFF

4-oz. can mushrooms, sliced
1 cup onion, chopped
1 1/2 lbs. ground beef
1 Tbsp. garlic, minced
10-oz. can tomato sauce
12-oz. can Ro-Tel tomatoes
1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
2 cups wide egg noodles
1 cup sour cream
Sauté mushrooms and onions until soft. Add ground beef; brown and drain. Add remaining ingredients except egg noodles and sour cream; cover and simmer 10 minutes. While simmering, cook egg noodles in another pot then drain when done. Stir sour cream into meat mixture. Serve over egg noodles.

HATCH PEPPER STEW

2 1/2 lbs. (approximately) pork stew meat
1 large onion, chopped
2 large Hatch peppers, chopped
1 jalapeño pepper, chopped
4 cloves garlic, chopped
2 14-oz. cans beef broth
1 tsp. cumin
1 tsp. coriander seed
25 cilantro leaves
cornstarch for desired thickness
6 medium new potatoes, cubed
Brown and drain pork. Sauté onion, peppers and garlic; add to meat. Cover meat mixture with broth and 1 1/2 cans of water. Add cumin and coriander; bring to boil. Reduce heat; simmer 45 minutes. Add cilantro; thicken with cornstarch. Add potatoes; simmer an additional 30 minutes.

DICKS' POTATO SALAD

15 small red potatoes, boiled
small amount olive oil
small amount balsamic vinegar
small amount red wine vinegar
1 red bell pepper, chopped
1 medium onion, chopped
3 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
celery seed, to taste
garlic powder, to taste
1 Tbsp. mustard
rosemary, to taste
salt and pepper, to taste
Quarter the boiled potatoes; glaze with olive oil and vinegars. While potatoes are still hot, add remaining ingredients; mix together. Bacon bits also make a nice addition.

WORLD'S BEST COBBLER

1 stick butter
1 cup sugar
3/4 cup self-rising flour
3/4 cup milk
28-oz. can sliced peaches in syrup, drained
Heat oven to 350 F. Place butter in deep baking dish; place in oven to melt. Blend together sugar and flour. Slowly add milk. Pour mixture over butter, do not stir! Add peaches; bake for 35-40 minutes. The batter will rise during baking.

CHILI SEASONING MIX

1/2 tsp. paprika
2 tsp. chili powder
1 tsp. cumin
1/4 tsp. anise
dash of salt
1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes
1/4 tsp. ground coriander
1 tsp. canned garlic, minced
Mix together well.

TWO-WAY RATATOUILLE

24-oz. can crushed tomatoes
2 cups red wine
12-oz. can tomatoes, diced
1 1/2 Tbsp. garlic, minced
1 tsp. pepper
1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
1/2 tsp. liquid smoke
1 tsp. coriander seed
1/4 tsp. anise seed
1/4 tsp. chili powder
1/4 tsp. achiote seed
1 onion, coarsely chopped
dash of cumin
3 zucchinis, sliced 1/2-inch thick
1 yellow squash, sliced 1/2-inch thick
Place all ingredients in a stockpot; cook over low heat until squash is barely tender. Let sit an hour or two. Reheat and cook 20 minutes before serving. For a heartier dish, brown 1 1/2 lb. ground chuck and 1/2 lb. bulk sausage in stockpot first; drain. Add other ingredients and proceed with directions.

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Here's a "Checklist" for Surviving a Financial Crisis

Over the past few weeks, the news has been almost incomprehensible. It's hard for many of us to make sense of the failure of major Wall Street firms and large banks and the $700 billion bailout of the financial sector. And it's hard for investors to be calm when stocks have fallen almost 30 percent from their all-time high a year ago. What can you do to cope? Consider the following "checklist" for surviving a financial crisis:

• **Close your ears** — but open your eyes. These days, you may hear some so-called "experts" talking about end-of-capitalism scenarios. Try not to listen to these doomsayers. We still have the most powerful economy in the history of the world and we will recover from these setbacks. However, even if you close your ears, you should keep your eyes wide open. Specifically, look for opportunities. Stock prices are down now, but they won't always be — and, all else being equal, investors who buy into the stock market at lower prices are likely to earn higher returns than those who buy stocks when prices are higher.

• **Focus on things you can control.** During a financial crisis, your success at weathering the storm depends on your ability to stay calm and concentrate on the things you can control. For example, you can control your emotions so that you aren't panicked into making unwise, short-term decisions, such as putting all your money under your mattress. And, to a certain extent, you can even control your portfolio's ability to withstand volatility. How? By diversifying your holdings as broadly as possible. The wider your range of investments, the less you'll be hurt by downturns that primarily affect one asset class. (Keep in mind, though, that diversification, by itself, cannot guarantee profits or protect against loss.)

• **Review and rebalance your portfolio.** During this market decline, some of your holdings have probably fallen more than others. As a result, you may now own a lower percentage of a specific asset class than you had originally intended when you built your portfolio. Consequently, you may want to meet with your financial advisor to determine if you should rebalance your portfolio by adding more money to those asset classes that have fallen the most. You may also want to rebalance if your risk tolerance or long-term goals have changed.

• **Look for quality investments.** In this economic environment, it's more important than ever to focus on quality investments. If you buy stocks, look for

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those companies with strong balance sheets. If you're purchasing bonds, stick with those that receive high credit ratings. If we are entering a prolonged economic downturn, these types of investments will, in all likelihood, fare better than lower-quality stocks and bonds.

• **Be patient.** No one can predict when a bear market will end, but history has shown that turnarounds can happen quickly and unexpectedly. So be patient. The most successful investors have the courage to stay the course and take advantage of opportunities while others are "bailing out" of the financial markets.

We may still have some rough roads ahead of us. But if you can check off every item on this list, you may be able to smooth out some of the bumps you'll encounter on your journey toward achieving your long-term goals. NOW

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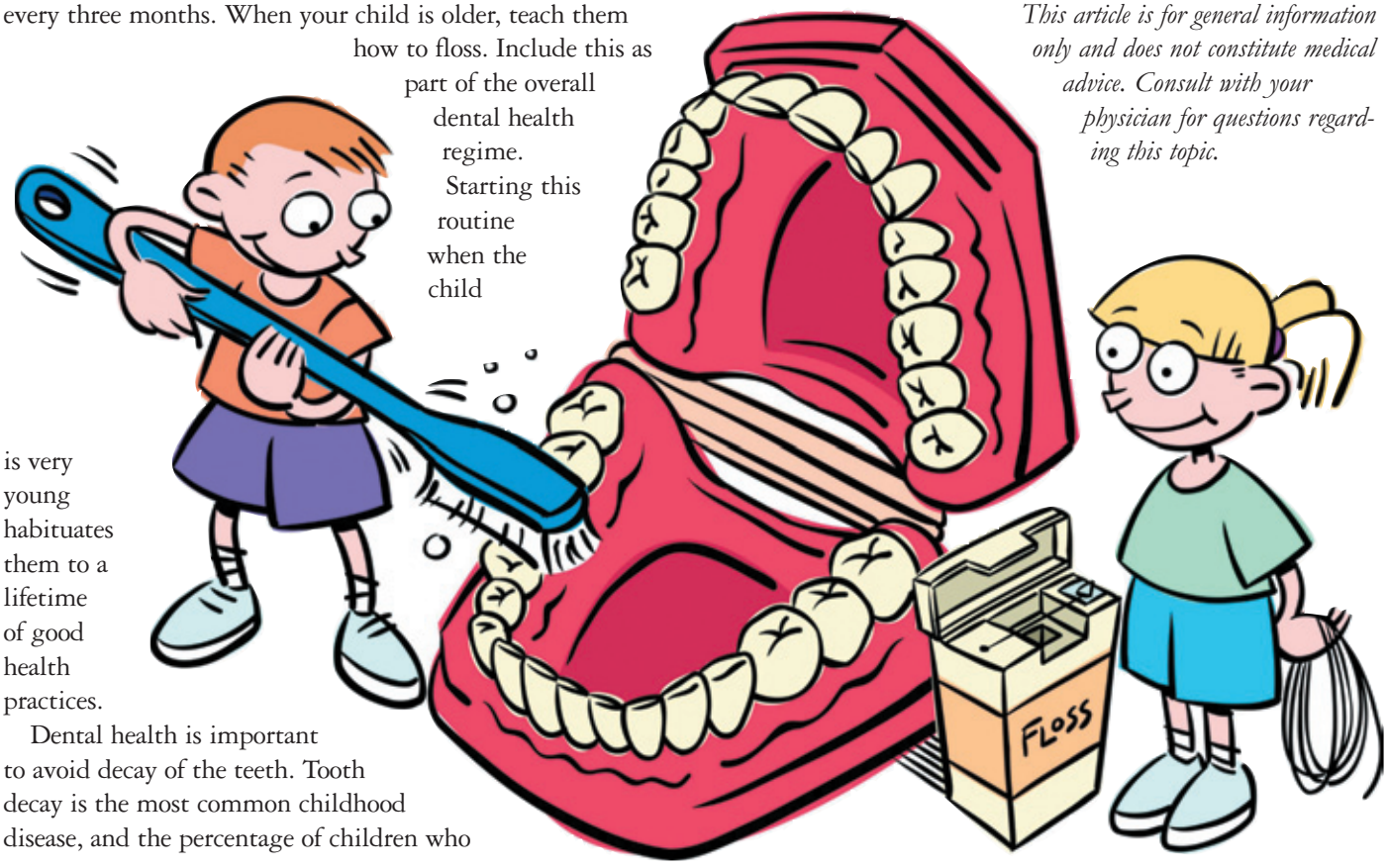
Children's Dental Health

— By Betty Tryon, R.N.

Is there anything sweeter than the sight of a child with a big smile on his or her face? Even if the smile has a few empty holes, it is still a beautiful thing to behold. If the empty spaces in the mouth are because of the normal growing process — no problem. However, if the empty spaces are because of tooth decay, there is a big problem. Dental care for children starts as soon as that first tooth proudly pushes its way to light. This does not mean parents need to rush their babies to the dentist; it means there is another element to childcare that needs to be addressed. The American Dental Association recommends dental appointments begin when your child is 1 year old.

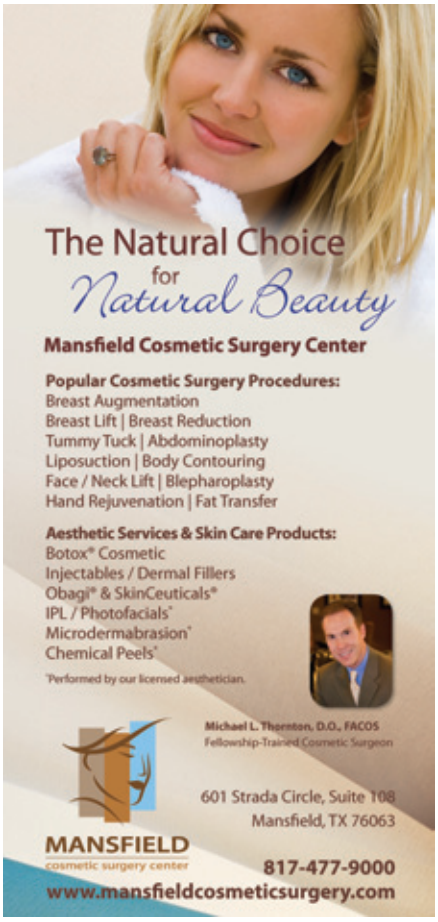
In the beginning, a moist washcloth cleans those tiny pearls just fine. When more teeth emerge, switch to a child's toothbrush with soft bristles. Do not use toothpaste until you are confident your child will not swallow it. This usually happens around 2 years of age. Only a very small amount of toothpaste is necessary. Toothbrushes should be replaced every three months. When your child is older, teach them how to floss. Include this as part of the overall dental health regime. Starting this routine when the child is very young habituates them to a lifetime of good health practices.



Dental health is important to avoid decay of the teeth. Tooth decay is the most common childhood disease, and the percentage of children who fall prey to this is on the upswing. Some parents may think that decay in baby teeth is not as important as in permanent teeth because baby teeth will fall out eventually. There are a couple of flaws in this line of thinking. For one, some of the baby teeth will stay with the child for many years. Also, cavities are painful and will influence how your child thinks, behaves and eats during this time.

There is a simple preventative to tooth decay — brushing your teeth (and your children's) to keep them free of plaque. Plaque sticks to teeth and attracts bacteria, which in turn feeds on the sugar in food, turning it into acid. The acid breaks down the tooth enamel causing cavities. Diet plays an important role in dental health. A child's intake of sugar should be monitored and limited. That includes drinks with sugar in them. Encourage snacks such as fresh vegetables and fruits, cheese and crackers, whole-wheat pretzels, trail mix and popcorn. Giving your child's teeth the attention they deserve can ensure many years of a beautiful smile. NOW

This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician for questions regarding this topic.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February 2009 Community Calendar

Every Monday
Duncanville Library Story Time for babies/toddlers: 10:15-10:45 a.m.

Every Monday and Tuesday
Cedar Hill Recreation Center presents Caliente Salsa: 8:00-9:30 p.m. Monthly Fee: $50, ages 12 and up. Learn Salsa, Cha Cha, Rumba, West Coast and Fast Step Swing, Lindy Hop, Latin Hustle and the newest club line dances!

Every Monday and Wednesday
Cedar Hill Recreation Center presents 21st Century Media and Sports: 6:30-8:30 p.m. An 8-week program to educate and integrate sports for those interested in journalism/communications: group discussions, hands-on activities, exploration of media formats. Ages 10-17 register at Rec. Center.

Every Tuesday
Duncanville Library Homeschool videos for school-age children: 2:00-2:30 p.m.

Every Tuesday and Thursday
Cedar Hill Recreation Center presents an 8-week College Navigation Workshop: 6:30-8:30 p.m. for students 10th-12th grade and/or parents. Learn basic rules, terminology and standards colleges use. Register at Rec. Center.

Every Wednesday
Rotary Club of Cedar Hill: 7:00-8:00 a.m. at CH Recreation Center, 310 East Parkerville Road.

Every Wednesday and Friday
Preschool story time at CH Library: 10:30-11:45 a.m. (972) 291-7323.

Every Thursday
Duncanville Library Story Time: ages 3-7: 10:15-10:45 a.m.

Duncanville Library presents *Lectura en Español*: 5:30-6:00 p.m.

Every Saturday
Cedar Hill Recreation Center presents Star Force One; includes tap, ballet, jazz, hip-hop, lyrical, song & dance and competition dance teams. Beginner – advanced classes: 8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. ages 2-adult. Ballet and tap classes available for special needs children. Register at Rec. Center.

First Mondays
Readers on the Hill Book Club: 7:00 p.m. at CH Library (972) 291-7323.

First Tuesdays
Dad's Night Out (with the kids): 7:00-7:45 p.m. at the Duncanville Library. (February: African-American folktales presented by Toni Simmons.)

Second and Fourth Tuesdays
Cedar Hill Lions: Noon-1:00 p.m. at Good Shepherd Church, 915 Old Straus Road. (972) 291-0651.

Second Tuesdays
Duncanville Governmental Affairs meeting: 8:30 a.m. at Chamber offices.

The Dallas Area Writers Group: 7:00 p.m. at CH Library. www.dallaswriters.org.

Second Wednesdays
Cedar Hill/Duncanville Early Childhood PTA: 10:00 a.m. at Hope Lutheran Church, 917 N. Straus Road.

Second and Fourth Wednesdays
Cedar Hill Business on the Hill: 7:30 a.m. at Chamber offices.

Third Mondays
Duncanville Executive Board meeting: 4:30 p.m. at Chamber offices.

Third Thursdays
Visual Artists of Cedar Hill (VACH): 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the CH Library; open to artists and anyone interested. www.thevach.org.

Third Fridays
The Senior Dance Club of Duncanville: 7:00 p.m. at Hopkins Senior Center, 201 James Collins Blvd; live band music with country/western or ballroom music (alternating months). Lou Craig-Bundrick (972) 298-7481.

February 7
Cedar Hill Daddy Daughter Dance "Sweetheart": two-hour dance, light lunch and refreshments, 5x7 souvenir portrait and gift bag for each girl. 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (ages 4-8); 2:00-4:00 p.m. (ages 9-12) at the Cedar Hill Rec. Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd. Cost: $30/couple; $15/person. Dads may attend more than one dance. Register at the center. (972) 293-5288.

DeSoto's 15th Annual Daddy Daughter Dance: 6:00-9:00 p.m. at DeSoto Civic Center, 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd. Cost: $30/couple; $15/additional child. Includes music, dancing, light refreshment and 5x7 photo. (972) 230-9651.

Duncanville's Daddy Daughter Dance: 6:00-9:00 p.m. at the D. L. Hopkins Senior Center. Cost is $30/couple; $15/additional child. (972) 780-5086.

February 8
DeSoto Arts Commission Reception: 3:00-5:00 p.m. at Corner Theatre, 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd. RSVP by Feb. 6. (972) 230-9648.

February 9
Northwood University hosts "My Mondays" for prospective students; includes class observations, campus tours and interaction with faculty. Register online: http://www.northwood.edu/forms/admissions/tx/mymondays/.

Cedar Hill ISD presents "An American Celebration" – tribute to our nation's veterans through visual art, theater and music: 6:00 p.m. (main lobby) and 7:00 p.m. (performance hall) Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center, 2301 Flora Street. Cost: $5 at the door; includes program.

February 9 and 23
Methodist Health System's mobile van will offer mammograms for women age 35 and older with no breast implants or current problems at the Methodist Charlton Midlothian Imaging Center, 2210 Bryan Place. Most major insurance plans, including Medicare Part B and Medicaid are accepted. Without insurance, cost: approximately $219.80. Payment due at time of service: cash, check, Visa or MasterCard. Appointments required. (972) 775-7410.

February 15
Concerned DeSoto Citizens Gospel Fest 2009: 4:00-7:00 p.m. at the Corner Theatre. Performances by the McCowan Middle School Choir and Drama Departments and The WWW Singers; proceeds benefit CDC's Scholarship Fund. Cost: $10. (972) 230-9648.

February 11
Keep Cedar Hill Beautiful presents Rain Barrel classes: 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the Cedar Hill Recreation Center. Learn how to save money by capturing rain water for personal use. Cost: $30/person for materials and instruction. Contact Josh McLerran (972) 291-5126, ext. 2818 to sign up.

February 12-14 and 19-21
Duncanville Community Theatre presents *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Bistro seating: 12th-14th (light hor d'oeuvers; cost: $15/ticket; no discounts); standard seating: 19th-21st; cost: $10/Thur. and $12/Fri. and Sat.; discounts available. Call (972) 223-8899.

February 19
Join the Young at Heart Adults (Holy Spirit Catholic Church's seniors), 11:00 a.m. in the Holy Spirit Community Center located at 1111 Danieldale, to hear the SilverTones. Music collection includes folk, spiritual, patriotic and songs from musicals. All are welcome; bring your favorite potluck dish to share. Contact Veronica Houston (972) 298-4971.

February 28
Admission testing for the 2009-2010 Canterbury Episcopal School year. Contact Rita Billups at (972) 572-7200, ext. 108 to register.

For more community events, visit our online calendar at www.nowmagazines.com.

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From Our Heart to Yours, Happy Valentine's Day

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